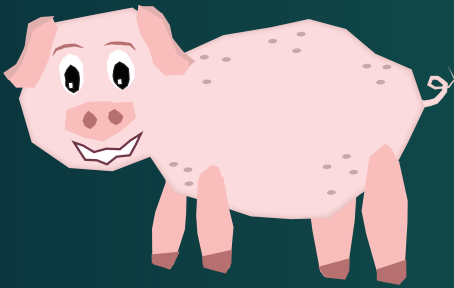


Food for Thought



CET

Choosing Between Feeding Animals, Composting, & Anaerobic Digestion for New York Businesses & Institutions



Your Guide to Food Scrap Hauling

With New York State enacting wasted food diversion mandates, businesses are looking at options for managing food scraps. This document will walk through the various food scrap handling choices and help you understand which option is best for your business.



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Every Peel Has Potential. Let's Break it Down!

- Roughly one-third of food produced globally for human consumption is lost or wasted, amounting to about 1.3 billion tons per year.
- Of this, approximately 66.5 million tons of wasted food are generated in the United States.
- For every 1,000 tons of food waste that ends up in landfills, an estimated 34 metric tons of fugitive methane emissions are released into the atmosphere. For New York, this adds up to around **120,300 metric tons** of methane emissions from food waste in landfills (EPA).



To address the environmental impact of wasted food, New York State passed the [Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling Law](#).

Who is Affected?

Businesses and institutions that generate an average of **two tons per week of wasted food or more**.

Key Requirements

- Affected entities must donate any surplus food that is safe for consumption.
- Businesses within **25 miles of an organics recycler** (composting facility, anaerobic digester, etc.) must recycle all remaining food scraps.
- Each year, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation publishes a list of affected entities, called Designated Food Scrap Generators (DFSGs), required to comply. Newly identified DFSGs will have to comply with the requirements of the law or file for waiver petition by January 1st of the following year.



What is Changing?

Beginning January 1st, 2027:

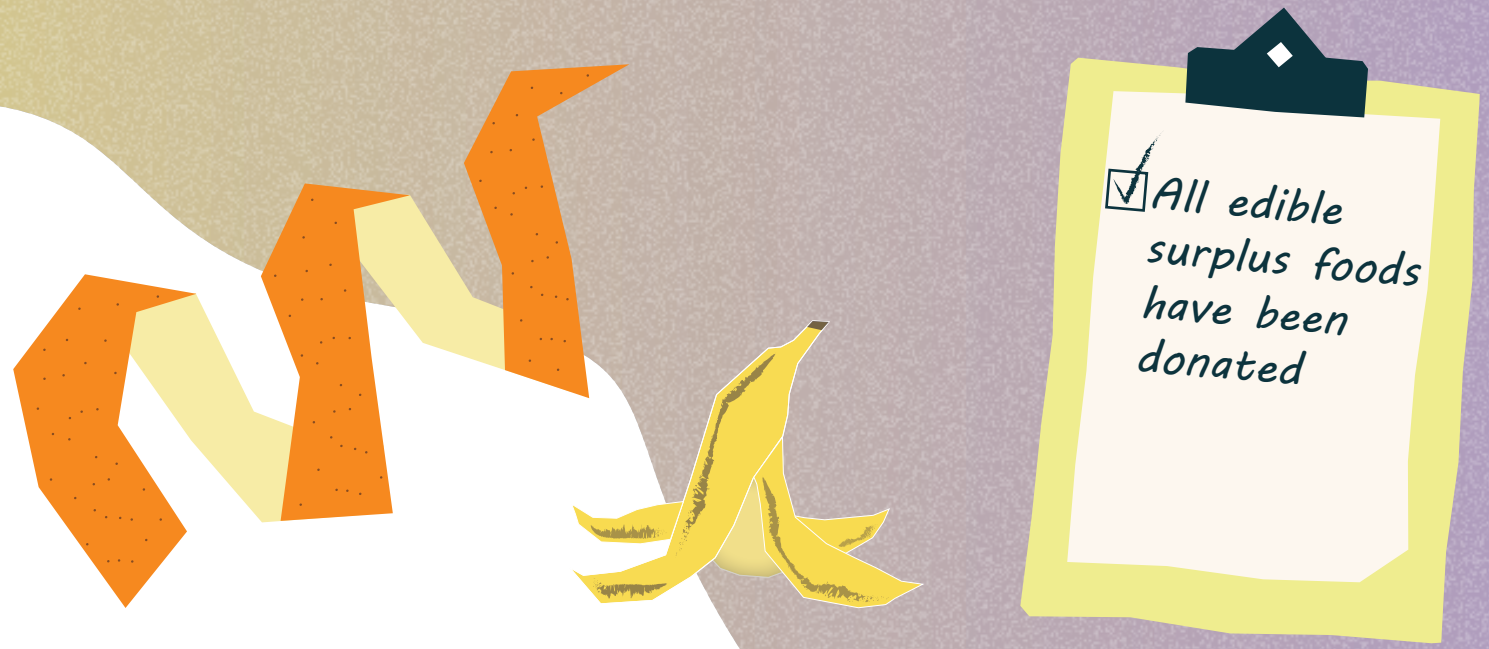
- The threshold for DFSG's will be reduced to **one ton per week or more**.
- The distance to a organics recycler will be expanded to **50 miles**.

Beginning January 1st, 2029:

- The threshold for DFSG's will be reduced to **one half ton or more per week**.

Where Your Food Scraps Are Processed Impacts What Goes in Your Food Scraps Bin

Navigate this table to determine which option best fits your needs, then read on for each part of the wasted food sector to guide your next steps.



Facility Type	Materials Typically* Accepted
Food Rescue Agencies**	Produce, baked goods, packaged items, perishables and nonperishables
Animal Feed	Vegetable and fruit scraps, bakery goods, grains, bread <i>Sometimes:</i> Meat, dairy, and animal by-products if heat treated
Commercial Composting Operation	Vegetable and fruit scraps, grains, bread, meat, dairy, eggshells, coffee filters and paper napkins <i>Sometimes:</i> Cardboard and compostable serveware
Community Composting Operation	Vegetable and fruit scraps, grains, bread, eggshells, coffee filters and paper napkins <i>Sometimes:</i> Cardboard and compostable serveware, meat and dairy (unless otherwise specified)
Anaerobic Digestion (including depackaging)	All types of pre- and post-consumer wasted food, beverages, food processing waste fats, oils, and greases <i>Sometimes:</i> Packaged wasted food

*Acceptance of materials may vary, so always confirm with the receiving facility.

**In general, entities that are already in the business of preparing and serving food for public consumption are already practicing the measures necessary to easily adopt safe food donation Practices.

Feeding Animals, Not Landfills

Animal feed operations, or farms raising animals like pigs, chickens, goats, and cows, can use food that would have gone to waste to feed livestock (EPA). Food scraps suitable for animal feed can come from a range of sources, including unsold retail food and pre-consumer food scraps.

Pig Bucket
FOOD SCRAPS
 Grains, bread, pasta
 Eggs, dairy
 Pizza, other food scraps

NO
 Meat, bones
 Tissues, napkins, paper towels
 Chip bags, wrappers, packets
 Plastic, metal, glass
 Other trash

Goat Bucket
FRUIT AND VEGETABLES ONLY

NO
 Tissues, napkins, paper towels
 Dairy, grains, meat
 Chip bags, wrappers

Food Scraps for Chicken Feed
VEGETATIVE FOOD SCRAPS
 Fruits & vegetables
 Plain bread (in limited amounts)

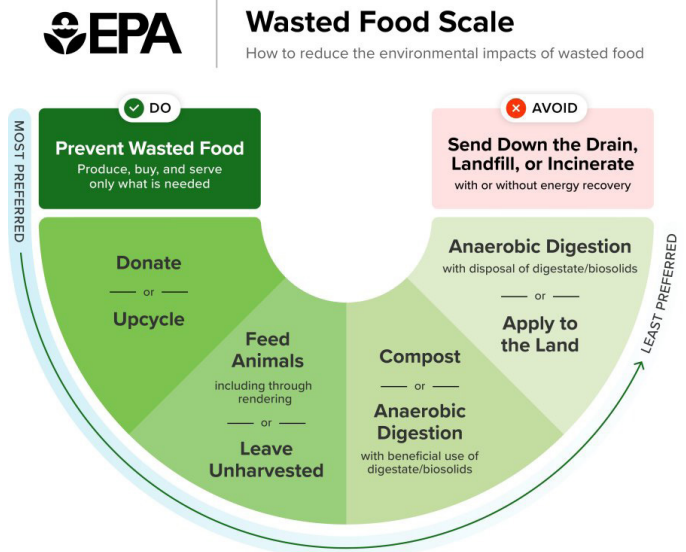
NO
 No rotten, salty, or fatty foods
 Potatoes, avocado, chocolate, onion, citrus, uncooked rice or beans
 Processed foods
 Wrappers, stickers, or other trash

If You Can't Feed People or Animals, Feed the Soil!

Composting is the natural process by which organic material is decomposed by beneficial micro- and macro-organisms. Composting operations are typically found on farms, municipal leaf and yard waste facilities, or as stand-alone operations. These can range from small community compost sites to large commercial operations.

Material for composting is generally transported to compost facilities by food scrap haulers, who collect feedstock from businesses and institutions. At the facility, it can take anywhere from a few months to a year to turn those scraps into a valuable finished compost product: a nutrient-rich soil amendment. This product can be sold to individuals, businesses, or municipalities.

See the Additional Resources page for more information on where to find food scrap haulers.



Benefits

- Mutually beneficial partnerships between food businesses and livestock farmers.
- Reduces the negative environmental impacts of disposed food.
- Can save farmers money on feed costs.
- In some cases, it is less expensive for businesses to send their food scraps to feed livestock than to a trash facility.

Considerations

Varying requirements for the food materials farms can accept depending on the animals they have. Be sure to check with your local farm operator for what materials they accept.

Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic developed a [state-specific fact sheet](#) outlining the legal considerations for feeding food scraps to animals in New York.

Animal feed operations without depackaging capabilities often have a very low tolerance for contamination by non-food materials.

Benefits

- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions that come with disposing of wasted food in a landfill.
- Produces a valuable soil amendment that can be sold throughout the local community.
- Compost can boost nutrients, help retain soil moisture, and prevent plant diseases and pests.
- Reduces the need for chemical fertilizers (EPA).
- Large-scale composting operations can generate strong community ties, as their maintenance and success often require participation and collaboration among many people, organizations, and/or businesses.

Considerations

- Depending on the composting system used, some composting facilities will accept third party certified compostable products e.g., BPI or TUV service ware and/or waxed cardboard with wasted food.
- Always check with your hauler or food scrap processor before investing in compostable service ware or other products.
- Commercial compost sites typically have a low tolerance for contamination.
- If there is no depackaging infrastructure, pre-sorting of material is required.
- Examples of contamination include glass, plastic, textiles, metal, and other objects that don't decompose during the composting process.

Turning Waste into Power

Anaerobic digesters (AD) are large, sealed vessels where microorganisms break down organic material, such as food scraps, in the absence of oxygen. This process produces two main by-products: **biogas** to generate energy and **digestate** which is used as fertilizer.

Many people refer to anaerobic digestion as “Cow Power” because most anaerobic digesters in the United States are located at livestock or dairy farms, where they process manure. However, the number of stand-alone digesters processing food scraps is steadily increasing.

Benefits

Generates electricity from captured methane for on-farm or local use as a source of renewable energy ([EPA](#)).

Many facilities can accept packaged wasted food as they commonly have de-packaging equipment to accommodate this.

AD facilities with de-packaging systems may accept lightly contaminated food scraps, such as front-of-house collections exposed to public use.

Produces nutrient-rich material that can be used for agricultural applications.

Provides an opportunity for diversified farm revenue ([EPA](#)).

Can be a source of economic growth in rural areas ([EPA](#)).

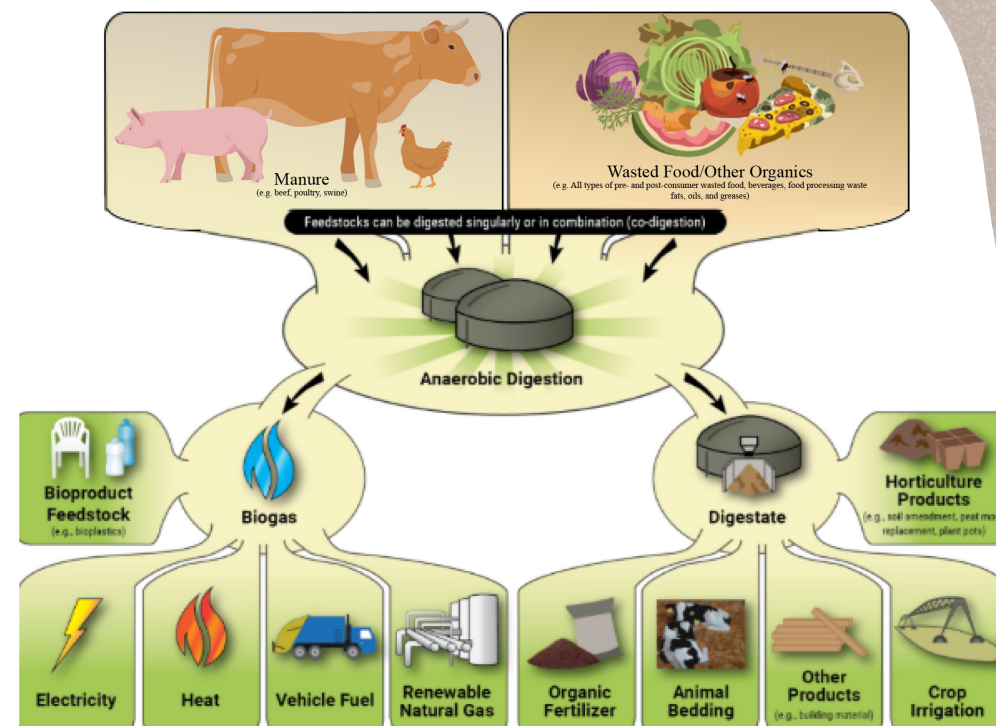
Considerations

AD facilities typically accept wasted food liquids, food processing waste, fats, oils, greases, and manure.

AD facilities cannot accept some common packaging materials such as glass. Please contact your local facility for more information on what is acceptable.

AD facilities typically do not process compostable plastics or paper products as these materials are removed by de-packaging.

Some AD facilities require food scraps in pulped form, known as slurry. Businesses can use on-site systems to process food waste into slurry, which haulers then collect and deliver to the AD facility.



Additional Resources

Food Scraps Transporters

- Find a food scrap hauling service for your organic material: [List of Food Scraps Transporters, Sorted by County Served](#).
- If you are a transport company that offers food scraps transport services for large businesses and are not listed, contact FoodScrapsLaw@dec.ny.gov.

Food Scrap Recyclers

- Find a food scraps recycler: [List of Food Scraps Recyclers, Sorted by County Located In](#).
- If you are an organics recycler that is not listed that offers food scraps recycling services for large businesses, please contact FoodScrapsLaw@dec.ny.gov.



Looking for additional support? CET can provide no-cost assistance to New York -based businesses and institutions to support wasted food diversion programs and more.

This support includes onsite waste assessments with tailored waste reduction recommendations to integrate seamlessly into your existing operations, educational presentations, staff training, customized signage for your waste and recycling bins, and connection to resources and service providers

Contact us at (866) 306-0911 or rethinkfoodwasteny@cetonline.org to get started. [Visit our website](#) to learn more.



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